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COORDINATION QUESTIONS

Implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan for women and development

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1989/105, requested the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, to report to the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Council on the extent to which the system-wide medium-term plan for women and development had been incorporated into the programmes and programme budgets of the organizations of the United Nations system. Progress was assessed through a comparison of information on activities contained in the programmes and programme budgets for the biennium 1988-1989, as revealed by the cross-organizational programme analysis of the activities of the United Nations system for the advancement of women, and for the biennium 1990-1991.

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INTRODUCTION

1. In resolution 1987/86, the Economic and Social Council accepted the system-wide medium-term plan for women and development and recommended that the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) make appropriate arrangements to implement the plan, including arrangements for monitoring its implementation. ACC accordingly submitted a report (E/1989/16) to the Council in 1989, through the Commission on the Status of Women, on the extent to which the plan was reflected in the plans and programmes of the organizations of the United Nations system for the period 1990-1995. In the same year, the Secretary-General submitted to the Council a cross-organizational programme analysis on the activities of the United Nations system for the advancement of women through the Committee for Programme and Coordination (E/1989/19 and Corr.1). The latter report indicated the extent to which activities for the advancement of women were contained in the programmes of the organizations for the biennium 1988-1989.

2. The Council, in its resolution 1989/105, requested the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, to report to the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Council biennially in odd-numbered years, beginning in 1991, on the extent to which the system-wide medium-term plan had been incorporated into the programmes and programme budgets of the organizations of the United Nations system. The cross-organizational programme analysis presented to the Council was to be used as a baseline indicator.

3. The organizations of the United Nations system provided information on their activities for the biennium 1990-1991 to the Division for the Advancement of Women, which was responsible for the preparation of the present report. For 1988-1989, information assembled by the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs for the cross-organizational programme analysis was used.

I. CONCLUSIONS

4. The system-wide medium-term plan has raised the awareness of programme planners of the organizations of the United Nations system of the need to identify activities related to women and development. This is reflected in a higher level of reporting for regular budget activities during 1990-1991 as compared with 1988-1989. While the patterns of activities over the two bienniums are similar, there has been a shift of emphasis towards operational activities and subprogrammes of the system-wide plan dealing with specific subjects and away from the subprogrammes of the plan concerned with comprehensive analysis of the situation of women and coordination.

5. There were serious difficulties in making reliable comparisons of the information provided in the cross-organizational programme analysis and the information collected for the present report. The method by which the organizations concerned report their activities should be improved for subsequent biennial reports.

II. METHODS USED IN PREPARING THE ANALYSIS

6. The baseline for the present analysis is the cross-organizational programme analysis of the activities of the United Nations system for the advancement of women (E/1989/19 and Corr.1). That study was prepared according to a methodology developed over several years which distinguishes between activities contained in the regular budgets and programmes of the organizations and technical cooperation and other operational activities.

7. Activities were classified generally according to the structure of the system-wide medium-term plan, but additional categories were used to cover work in the areas of peace and equality, which were not part of the system-wide plan on women and development, as the cross-organizational programme analysis was intended to include all activities concerned with the advancement of women. In practice this referred only to a few activities in the area of peace.

8. Most activities intended explicitly to benefit women were part of larger activities with a wider set of intended beneficiaries. Accordingly, in these cases estimates had to be made of the approximate proportion of the larger activity that should be counted. The earlier analysis therefore provided figures that constituted an estimated order of magnitude rather than a full accounting in financial terms.

9. These characteristics of the cross-organizational programme analysis should be borne in mind when examining the present analysis. The figures in the earlier analysis, because of the way they were selected, classified and presented, differ from the figures presented here in the following respects:

(a) The current analysis includes only those activities found in programme budgets or central programmes of organizations because the system-wide medium-term plan was intended to guide those activities that could be explicitly programmed on the basis of a medium-term plan or programme approved at an intergovernmental level. Operational activities, which respond to the requests of Governments, are not programmable in the same sense. For that reason, although operational activities are clearly relevant to the implementation of the plan, they have not been included in the present analysis;

(b) The present analysis uses as its categories the subprogrammes of the system-wide medium-term plan. Any activity contained in the cross-organizational programme analysis that was assigned to another category has been subsumed under one of the subprogrammes of the plan.

10. The original information used in the cross-organizational programme analysis for the biennium 1988-1989 was first examined activity by activity in order to determine whether similar activities were included in the programme budget of the organization concerned for the biennium 1990-1991. The resulting information was submitted to that organization for amendment, addition or deletion. The information used in the present analysis was provided or certified by each organization concerned.

11. The preparation of cross-organizational programme analyses inevitably required judgements about what information to include, how to classify it and what levels of monetary resources should be assumed for each activity. When, as in the present case, such judgements are made at two time periods by different offices, they may differ. While efforts were made to minimize these differences through agreements on definitions and procedures and through the use of the original data from the cross-organizational programme analysis, the comparisons of the data for the two bienniums should be interpreted with extreme caution. This is particularly important where very large changes have occurred. The only unit whose information is believed to have been provided in the same way, under the same assumptions and the same supervision in both bienniums is the Division for the Advancement of Women, all of whose activities are concerned with the advancement of women, are explicitly covered by the plan and were reported in the cross-organizational programme analysis.

12. In most organizations, extrabudgetary allocations are accounted for as projects rather than as part of the subprogrammes of the budget. Moreover, they are only accurate after the fact. In budget documents, they constitute, at best, estimates of resources that might ultimately be received; at worst, they are hopes. The information provided on extrabudgetary financing in 1990-1991 and 1988-1989 was deemed to be very inaccurate and the analysis was therefore limited to funding from the regular budgets of the organizations.

13. The net effect of the methodology used in the present report is that activities for women in development are analysed according to the extent to which they have been included in the programmed activities of the regular or administrative budgets of the organizations concerned. They show the extent to which such activities are built into the recurrent budgetary system, but by excluding extrabudgetary expenditures, they do not show the full magnitude of the system's work concerning women.

14. However, the problems encountered in obtaining reliable, comparable information for the two bienniums raise serious questions about how to provide accurate reporting on the implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan using the methodology of the cross-organizational programme analysis. The monitoring of the plan, and the corresponding reporting of expenditures, needs to be seen in the larger context of expenditure reporting on the activities of the United Nations system.

III. TRENDS IN THE INCORPORATION OF THE SYSTEM-WIDE MEDIUM-TERM PLAN IN PROGRAMMES AND PROGRAMME BUDGETS

15. The intent of the system-wide medium-term plan was both (a) to encourage individual organizations to make provision in their work programmes and budgets for activities related to women and development and (b) to encourage a well-planned and coordinated approach. With that in mind, the analysis first examines the extent to which individual organizations have included activities related to the advancement of women in their work programmes for the bienniums 1988-1989 and 1990-1991. It then examines the amount and approximate monetary magnitude of the work being done on each of the 23 subprogrammes contained in the system-wide medium-term plan.

A. Trends by organization

16. A total of 31 organizations indicated their intention to implement the system-wide medium-term plan. Of these, 30 organizations reported information on activities for the advancement of women in the cross-organizational programme analysis. Twenty-three organizations have been included in the present analysis. A number of organizations, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme, do not have programming systems that allow them to separate programmable substantive headquarters activities from operational activities and therefore have not reported "headquarters only" activities.

17. The results for those organizations that have reported programmable activities are presented in table 1.

Table 1. Estimated amounts in regular budgets devoted to women and development, by organization, 1988-1989 and 1990-1991

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Organizational unit	1988-1989	1990-1991	Change
United Nations			
Division for the Advancement of Women, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs	2 184.9	2 587.1	402.2
Department of International Economic and Social Affairs	907.7	6 008.0	5 100.3
Department of Technical Cooperation for Development	96.0	30.0	-66.0
United Nations Centre for Science and Technology for Development	8.2	3.4	-4.8
United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations	15.4	8.6	-6.7
Department of Political and Security Council Affairs	7.2	4.0	-3.2
Department of Conference Services	9.9	0.0	-9.9
Department of Public Information	53.9	0.0	-53.9

Table 1 (continued)

Organizational unit	1988-1989	1990-1991	Change
United Nations (continued)			
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	14.4	4.3	-10.1
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	7.5	9.9	2.4
Economic Commission for Africa	701.0	5 367.1	4 666.1
Economic Commission for Europe	1.8	2.5	0.7
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	214.0	109.0	-105.0
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	114.0	149.3	35.3
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia	176.4	523.0	346.6
United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)	18.0	45.0	27.0
International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women	2 448.0	2 578.0	130.0
Specialized agencies			
International Labour Organisation	3 290.3	8 782.8	5 492.5
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	8 785.4	22 022.2	13 236.8
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	1 453.3	1 068.9	-384.4
World Health Organization	1 259.9	9 736.8	8 476.9
World Bank	1 500.0	2 000.0	500.0
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	491.7	936.6	444.9
TOTAL	23 862.8	61 991.6	38 128.8

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18. The table shows that most organizations report an increase in the resources devoted to women in development. Some of these increases may be due to improved identification of activities related to women in subprogrammes related to other issues, as in the case of ECA, ILO, FAO and WHO, all of which show major increases. In the case of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, the increase is partly attributable to the larger percentage of the population programme identified as directly related to women in development, but it also reflects an increase in the specific activities dealing with women and population as part of the work programme. Increases are also partly a matter of inflation. The question of growth is illustrated by the Division for the Advancement of Women, which had no increase in staff over the two bienniums. Most of the growth shown in table 1 is a result of inflation, although there was a slight real increase in funds available for consultants and expert groups.

19. Nevertheless, the conclusion can be drawn that many organizations have increased the resources destined for the advancement of women in implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan.

B. Trends by subprogramme of the system-wide medium-term plan

20. The division of responsibility for subprogrammes in the system-wide medium-term plan was agreed by the organizations during the formulation of the plan and was presented along with the plan. It was subsequently adjusted following adoption of the plan. The revised division of labour, differentiated between major and supporting responsibility, was reported to the Council (see E/1989/16). This division of labour is shown in the annex to the present report.

21. Table 2 shows the relative allocation of resources by subprogramme of the system-wide medium-term plan for the organizations included in the present analysis. The table shows that increased relative emphasis has been given to subprogrammes dealing with health, nutrition and family planning; research, policy analysis and dissemination; and technical cooperation, training and advisory services. The greatest relative decline in emphasis is in the subprogrammes of the programme on comprehensive approaches to women and development.

Table 2. Relative allocation of resources by subprogramme of the system-wide medium-term plan, 1988-1989 and 1990-1991

(Percentage)

Subprogramme	1988-1989	1990-1991	Change in relative resource levels
1.1	5.9	1.4	-4.6
1.2	1.5	0.4	-1.1
2.1	4.0	3.8	-0.2
2.2	9.4	13.2	3.8
2.3	13.3	14.9	1.6
2.4	2.6	3.7	1.2
2.5	2.6	2.3	-0.3
2.6	0.1	0.6	0.5
3.1	3.5	14.5	11.0
3.2	0.0 a/	0.0 a/	0.0
3.3	0.6	0.3	-0.3
3.4	1.4	1.4	0.0
4.1	1.1	1.4	0.2
4.2	0.2	0.9	0.7
5.1	1.4	5.0	3.6
5.2	2.5	1.5	-0.9
5.3	5.8	12.0	6.2
5.4	26.3	16.6	-9.7
5.5	1.5	0.6	-0.9
6.1	4.5	2.4	-2.1
6.2	3.6	1.0	-2.6
6.3	5.3	1.1	-4.1
6.4	2.9	0.9	-2.0
Total	100.0	100.0	0.0

a/ Less than .04 per cent.

Annex

ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE AGREED TO IMPLEMENT THE SYSTEM-WIDE MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT

Programme and subprogramme	Level of responsibility	
	Major	Supporting
1. Elimination of legal and attitudinal forms of discrimination		
1.1 International standards	United Nations (UNOV, UNHCR), ILO	United Nations (DTCD), UNESCO
1.2 Promoting more positive attitudes towards the role of women in development	United Nations (UNOV, DPI, ESCAP, ECA, ESCWA), UNESCO, INSTRAW, UNDP, UNIFEM	United Nations (WFC, UNEP), UNFPA, UNICEF, ILO, FAO, WHO, WFP, World Bank, UNIDO, IFAD
2. Access to productive resources, income and development		
2.1 Overall trends and policies in women's employment	ILO, UNIFEM, United Nations (ESCAP, ECA, ESCWA)	UNIDO, United Nations (DIESA, DTCD, ECLAC, ECE, UNCTAD), FAO, INSTRAW, UNDP, World Bank
2.2 Vocational training and training on women and development	ILO, INSTRAW, United Nations (DTCD, CSTD, UNRWA, ECA, ESCWA), UNESCO, UNIFEM, WHO	United Nations (Habitat, UNCTAD, UNHCR, UNEP), UNDP, FAO, UNIDO, WFP, UNFPA
2.3 Food and agriculture	FAO, IFAD, UNIFEM, WFP, United Nations (ECA, UNEP), World Bank	UNDP, United Nations (ESCAP, UNCTAD, CSTD, WFC, UNHCR, DTCD), UNICEF, ILO, UNIDO
2.4 Industry	UNIDO, UNIFEM, United Nations (ESCAP, ECA, ESCWA, UNEP)	United Nations (DIESA, CSTD, Habitat, UNCTAD), ILO, FAO, UNDP
2.5 Entrepreneurship and access to credit	UNIFEM, United Nations (DIESA, DTCD, ECA), FAO	United Nations (ESCAP, ECE, UNCTAD), ILO, ITC, UNIDO, WFP, UNDP, UNICEF
2.6 Informal sector	ILO, INSTRAW, UNIFEM, United Nations (Habitat, DTCD, ESCAP, ECA, ESCWA), WFP	United Nations (ECE, UNCTAD, UNHCR, UNRWA), UNFPA, UNIDO, FAO, IFAD, UNESCO

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Programme and subprogramme	Level of responsibility	
	Major	Supporting
3. Access to services		
3.1 Health, nutrition and family planning	WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF, FAO, WFP, IFAD, World Bank, United Nations (ECLAC, UNRWA)	United Nations (DTCD, WFC, UNHCR, UNEP, UNCTAD), ILO, UNIFEM
3.2 Literacy and education	UNESCO, UNICEF	United Nations (CSTD, UNCTAD, UNHCR, UNRWA), UNFPA, World Bank, FAO, WFP
3.3 Housing, settlement, water, energy and transport	United Nations (ECA, Habitat, UNEP, UNRWA, DTCD, DIESA), FAO, WFP, UNICEF, INSTRAW, IFAD, UNIFEM, UNDP	United Nations (UNCTAD, CSTD, UNHCR), ILO, UNESCO, WHO
3.4 Other social infrastructure and support services	United Nations (UNOV, DIESA, UNRWA, ESCAP, ESCWA, ECA), ILO, WHO, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNIFEM	WFP, UNIDO, United Nations (UNCTAD, UNHCR), FAO
4. Decision-making		
4.1 Participation in management and decision-making	United Nations (UNOV, OHRM, DTCD, ESCWA, ECA, ESCAP), INSTRAW, ILO, UNIFEM, UNFPA	United Nations (UNEP, UNHCR), UNDP, WHO, UNIDO, UNESCO, FAO
4.2 Participation in groups, associations, cooperatives, trade unions and other non-governmental organizations	ILO, INSTRAW, UNIFEM, United Nations (UNOV, DIESA), UNIDO, FAO, WHO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF	United Nations (ESCAP, ECLAC, UNEP, UNHCR), WFP
5. Improving means of international action		
5.1 Development of statistics and indicators	United Nations (DIESA, DTCD, ECLAC, ESCWA, ESCAP), ILO, FAO, INSTRAW, UNESCO	UNFPA, United Nations (ECA, Habitat, UNCTAD), World Bank, WHO, UNIDO
5.2 Information dissemination	United Nations (DPI, UNOV, UNEP, ESCWA, ECA, ESCAP, ECLAC), INSTRAW, ILO, FAO, UNESCO	WFP, UNFPA, UNIFEM, United Nations (DTCD, UNHCR)
5.3 Research, policy analysis and dissemination	United Nations (UNOV, DIESA, DPI, ECLAC, ESCAP, ECA, ESCWA), INSTRAW, ILO, UNIFEM, UNESCO	FAO, UNFPA, UNIDO, World Bank, United Nations (UNCTAD, DTCD, Habitat, UNHCR), UNDP

Programme and subprogramme	Level of responsibility	
	Major	Supporting
5.4 Technical cooperation, training and advisory services	UNDP, United Nations (DTCD, ECLAC), UNIFEM, ILO, FAO, WHO, UNIDO, INSTRAW, UNESCO	UNFPA, World Bank, IMO, United Nations (Habitat, ESCAP, UNCTAD, UNEP, UNHCR), WFP
5.5 Science and technology	United Nations (CSTD, UNCTAD, ECA), INSTRAW, ILO, UNIDO, FAO, WHO	UNESCO, UNDP
6. Comprehensive approaches to women and development		
6.1 Analysis of the interrelationship of factors affecting women and development	United Nations (UNOV, DIESA, ESCWA, ESCAP, ECA, ECLAC, UNEP), INSTRAW, UNIFEM	ILO, FAO, WHO, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNFPA, World Bank, WFP, United Nations (UNCTAD, UNHCR, UNEP), UNDP, UNICEF
6.2 Monitoring and review and appraisal of basic policy guidelines and national experience	United Nations (UNOV, DIESA, ESCWA, ESCAP, ECA, ECLAC), INSTRAW, UNIFEM	UNFPA, ILO, FAO, UNESCO, WHO, UNIDO, WFP, United Nations (DTCD, UNHCR), IFAD
6.3 Strengthening national machineries and mechanisms for planning and policy-making	United Nations (UNOV, DTCD, ECA, ESCAP, ECLAC, ESCWA, UNEP), UNIFEM, INSTRAW, UNFPA	FAO, United Nations (WFC)
6.4 Coordinating a system-wide approach to women and development	United Nations system	